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# ***MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES***

***TITLE: CONTRACTOR SUPPORT IN THEATER – IS THE MARINE CORPS  
READY FOR LOGISTICS MERCENARIES?***

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Title: CONTRACTOR SUPPORT IN THEATER – IS THE MARINE CORPS READY FOR LOGISTICS MERCENARIES?**

**Author:** Major Mark D. LaViolette, USMC

**Thesis:** As contractors are increasingly used to support Joint Forces in theater, the Marine Corps needs to understand the implications of using this support option for Marine Corps expeditionary operations.

#### **Discussion:**

It is commonplace for contractors to accompany deployed forces into theater in order to provide vital support and services. Although civilians have always accompanied the military into war, current trends make this occurrence even more prevalent. Critical support from contractors could include transportation of supplies, maintenance of combat equipment, construction / operation of base camps, and almost anything that the deployed forces are willing to pay for.

Contractors have often been called a “force multiplier” in that they allow the military to deploy more “tooth” instead of “tail.” Much has been written on this subject from the joint community and other services. The Marine Corps lags behind in this effort. Regardless, the employment of contractors is a double-edged sword - along with the many benefits come both risks and limitations. Specifically, mission accomplishment could be at risk as the threat increases because contractors are not warfighters, they operate outside of the traditional chain of command, and they may compromise operational security. Additionally, the services may find it irresistible to cut resources to support units that can be contracted out during contingencies, thus degrading organic support capabilities.

Contracting may be appropriate for the Marine Corps at the operational level of war. Specifically, contractors could augment the Marine Logistics Command (MLC) by fulfilling operational logistics tasks. At the tactical level of war, the Marine Corps should be extremely careful about tasking contractors to perform critical support functions such as CSS. With regard to CSS – this capability is an integral part of the MAGTF. Contracting out current organic functions could put the Marine Corps on the slippery slope of destroying the cohesiveness, scalability and warfighting effectiveness of the MAGTF.

**Conclusion:** Contractors will increasingly be providing critical support to the Marine Corps while deployed in theater. Hence, the Corps should understand the benefits, risks, and limitations of this support option and ensure that its expeditionary nature and warfighting capabilities are not unwittingly compromised.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The United States Marine Corps has always prided itself on its ability to operate independently in an expeditionary environment. In fact its “Expeditionary Culture” is documented as a Core Competency in *Marine Corps Strategy 21*:

Marines are prepared to deploy into diverse, austere, and chaotic environments on short notice and accomplish assigned missions using our unique command, control, and logistics capabilities to operate independently of existing infrastructure. These unique capabilities allow Marine units to enable joint, allied, coalition operations, and inter-agency coordination.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the Marine Corps is also able to operate “as part of a larger Joint Force ... ideally suited for joint, allied, and coalition warfare.”<sup>2</sup> The Marine Corps has in fact proven this capability during numerous operations and exercises.

What is missing from the Corps’ current strategy, concepts, and doctrine is how it will interact with the increasing number of contractors supporting joint, allied and coalition warfare. If past and current operations serve as a template for the future, deployed Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) will increasingly see civilian contractors supporting contingency task forces. These contractors could be tasked to transport supplies, maintain combat equipment, build base camps, perform engineering functions, operate mess halls, and do almost anything that the deployed forces are willing to pay for. Today’s battlefield is becoming littered with logistics mercenaries. It is commonplace for contractors to accompany deployed forces into theater in order to provide vital support and services.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Strategy 21* (Washington, DC: 3 November 2000), 2. Cited hereafter as *MC Strategy 21*.

<sup>2</sup> *MC Strategy 21*, 5.

Contractors have provided and will continue to provide capabilities traditionally handled by uniformed personnel during current and future Peace Keeping/Enforcement Operations, Humanitarian Assistance Missions, and other Small Scale Contingencies (SSC). It is also conceivable that they will also play a part in Major Theater War (MTW) scenarios. In this regard, the Marine Corps must be prepared to operate with numerous civilian contractors accompanying the force during future operations.

The Marine Corps needs to understand how contractors will play a part in future MAGTF operations and affect its expeditionary culture. Success may hinge on how well the Marine Corps understands the benefits, risks and limitations of using contractor support and applies these insights during future the Joint, Allied, and Combined operations.

Given the trend to increase the use of contractors in contingencies, the following questions emerge. Are civilian contractors really a force multiplier? What are the benefits of using contractor support? What are the risks and limitations associated with using contractors? And finally, should the Marine Corps depend upon contractors to perform critical support missions? Answering these questions will be the focus of this paper, with a chapter devoted to each. However, before these questions can be tackled, it might be useful to examine the context, that is, the time, place and circumstances affecting the use of contractors.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BACKGROUND**

The background chapter is organized into three sub-sections. The first examines how contractor support fits into the three levels of war, the second presents a brief history of contractors on the battlefield, and finally, the third summarizes the emerging joint and service literature on this subject.

#### **CONTRACTORS AND THE LEVELS OF WAR**

Throughout history, contractors have always been involved to some extent on the battlefield. Every level of warfare - from the strategic, operational, and tactical - has had some dependence on non-combatant civilians (e.g., contractors) for necessary logistical support.

At the strategic level of war, “logistics encompasses the nation’s ability to raise, deploy, and sustain operating forces in the execution of the national military strategy.”<sup>3</sup> Contractors and civil servants play an integral part at this level in that they produce the vast majority of all material supplied and services rendered to the U. S. Armed Forces. These dedicated civilians develop weapons systems, manage material readiness, maintain facilities, and operate strategic lift. Examples of contractors working at this level include defense contractors supplying weapon systems for the military, civilian workers at the Marine Corps Logistics Bases performing depot maintenance on equipment, civilian construction companies re-paving roads on Marine Corps Bases, and the commercial airline industry transporting troops to-and-from overseas operations.

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<sup>3</sup> Marine Corp Doctrinal Publication 4, *Logistics*, (Washington, DC: GPO, February 1997), 49. Cited hereafter as MCDP 4.

The employment of contractors at this level of war makes sense because it is not economical, effective or reasonable for uniformed personnel to perform these tasks.

At the operational level of war, “logistics addresses sustainment within a military theater of operations. It connects the logistics efforts of the strategic level with the tactical level...It normally encompasses three tasks; providing resources to the tactical commanders; procuring resources not provided by strategic logistics, and managing resources necessary to sustain the campaign.”<sup>4</sup> Examples of civilians / contractors working at this level include many Host Nation support services, reconstitution of Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS) in theater, and contracted intratheater transportation.

At the tactical level of war, “logistics is concerned with sustaining forces in combat. It deals with the feeding, fueling, arming, and maintenance of troops and equipment. Tactical logistics involves the actual performance of the logistics functions of supply, maintenance, transportation, health services, general engineering, and other services with resources immediately or imminently available.”<sup>5</sup> Recent history shows that civilian contractors are playing an ever-increasing role at this level of warfare. Recent operations in Somalia, Southwest Asia, Haiti, the Balkans, and East Timor, are replete with examples of civilian contractors providing tactical logistics functions to deployed uniformed personnel. Specifically, contractors have delivered supplies, maintained weapons systems, and built / operated base camps in many of the above-mentioned contingencies.

Civilian contractors working at the operational and tactical levels of war will be the focus of this paper. The Marine Corps Service Component and MAGTF will operate at these two

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<sup>4</sup> MCDP 4, 50.

<sup>5</sup> MCDP 4, 52.

levels while deployed in theater. Hence, it is important that commanders and planners understand the benefits and risks of employing contractors at this level.

## **BRIEF HISTORY – CONTRACTORS IN THEATER**

Numerous historical examples of civilians supporting military formations on the battlefield can be found from ancient times to the present. American history has many examples showing how civilians successfully contributed toward winning wars. As early as the Revolutionary War, General George Washington relied on civilian wagons and boats to transport his Army.<sup>6</sup>

The military's reliance on deployed civilians has increased dramatically since the Persian Gulf War. During Operations Desert Shield / Desert Storm the ratio of civilian to military personnel a one to fifty ratio.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, recent contingency operations have shown an increased reliance on contractor support and a resulting decrease in the civilian to military ratio. "At one point in Bosnia, the Army uniformed presence was 6,000 supported by 5,900 civilian contractors;"<sup>8</sup> a nearly one-to-one ratio.

The United States Marine Corps has depended upon civilian / contractors during much of its recent history. Even during the Corps' most trying operations, civilians have successfully contributed to the operational success.

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<sup>6</sup> James A. Huston, *Logistics of Liberty: American Services of Supply in the Revolutionary War and After*, (Newark, DE: Univ. of Del Press, 1991), 145-148.

<sup>7</sup> Col Steven J. Zamparelli, USAF, "Issue and Strategy for the new Millennium – Competitive Sourcing and Privatization - Contractors on the Battlefield: What have we Signed Up For?" *Air Force Journal of Logistics* (Fall 1999), 12-13.

<sup>8</sup> Gordan L. Campbell, "Contractors on the Battlefield: The Ethics of Paying Civilians to Enter Harm's Way and Requiring Soldiers to Depend Upon Them," Paper prepared for and presented to the *Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics 2000*, URL: <<http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/jscope00/campbell00.html>> accessed 17 July 2000. Cited hereafter as Campbell.

On Wake Island during World War II, contractors helped build the island defenses before the Japanese invasion. Although, these civilians were on the island to build an airfield for the Navy and did not expect to be drawn into the battle, they greatly assisted Major James P. S. Devereux in preparing for the impending invasion. As he points out in *The Story of Wake Island*:

It could not have been done without...civilian workmen. With their heavy equipment, for instance, they could build a bomb shelter in a fraction of the time it would have taken Marines with pick and shovel. The saving in time meant lives saved because it meant that we had to take our chances in fewer raids without bomb shelters...<sup>9</sup>

Contracted civilians assisted the Marines during the initial stage of the Guadalcanal campaign as well. In the first days of the operation, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division enlisted the help of islanders to move supplies from the beach to the supply dumps and airfield. The Marines found that the hired natives could “carry loads that our men [i.e., Marines] could not equal” and that their efforts were invaluable because they helped the Marines conserve their energy.<sup>10</sup>

More recently during Desert Shield / Desert Storm, deployed Marines could not have accomplished their mission without the help of civilian contractors. For example, the civilian crews on the Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS) were essential to support of the initial off-load. Additionally, during preparation for the ground war, Marine Corps logisticians sought the assistance of civilian commercial trucks, nicknamed “Saudi Motors,” to move Marine Corps supplies into forward positions before the fight.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Col James P.S. Devereux, USMC (Ret.), *The Story of Wake Island* (New York: J.B. Lippincott: 1947), 63. Cited hereafter as Devereux.

<sup>10</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, “Guadalcanal After Action Report,” (Quantico, VA: MCU Research Center Archives, May 1943), Annex Z (11). Cited hereafter as 1<sup>st</sup> MarDiv Guadalcanal AAR.

<sup>11</sup> Lt Gen James A. Brabham, “Theater Logistics,” lecture presented to the Marine Corps Command and Staff College (Quantico, VA: 4 January 2001). Quoted with his permission (e-mail to author 8:44 AM, 17 January 2001). Cited hereafter as Brabham’s Lecture.

As LtGen (Ret) James A. Brabham, USMC points out, contractors have always played a role during recent operations:

Contractors have been on the battlefield during all my Marine Corps experience is some way or another. In Vietnam they...did most of the big civil engineering jobs. The Hawk Battalions have taken civilian technical representatives with them wherever deployed... IBM contractors maintained the I MEF mainframe computer in Desert Storm.<sup>12</sup>

The use of contractors has become so prevalent since the Gulf War that the U.S. Army (USA), U.S. Air Force (USAF), and U.S. Navy (USN) have formalized programs to manage large-scale contingency support contracts. “Examples include the Army’s LOGCAP (Logistics Civil Augmentation Program), the Air Force’s AFCAP (Air Force Contract Augmentation Program), the Navy’s CONCAP (Construction Capabilities Program), CRAF (Civil Reserve Air Fleet), and war reserve materiel (WRM) contracts.”<sup>13</sup>

Marines recently deployed to Small Scale Contingencies (SSC) will most likely have received support through a LOGCAP contract. Brown and Root Services, Incorporated, had the first LOGCAP contract and supported operations in such places as Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. DynCorp currently holds the LOGCAP contract and currently supports operations in both Kosovo and East Timor.

Several factors have contributed to the trend toward contractors. First, the downsizing of the military following the Gulf War and the increased operational tempo of recent overseas operations have caused the services to seek alternative support arrangements to relieve stress on the deployed forces. Secondly, because the U.S. Army (the largest user of contractors) has a large percentage of its Combat Service Support (CSS) force structure in its reserve component, it

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<sup>12</sup> Lt Gen James A. Brabham, “Contractors on the Battlefield,” e-mail to a author, 10:17 AM, 12 December 1999. Quoted with his permission (e-mail to author 8:44 AM, 17 January 2001). Cited hereafter as Brabham 12 Dec 99 e-mail.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 4-0, *Doctrine for Logistics Support of Joint Operations*, (Washington, DC: 6 April 2000), V-2. Cited hereafter as JP 4-0.

finds it difficult to commit reserve units to multi-year operations. Third, the technical complexity of weapons systems and cost to maintain organic capabilities has increased the reliance on contractors to provide support. Finally, DoD has pushed to outsource and privatize support and services.

It is not surprising that contractors have taken a greater support role in current operations. Since the end of the Cold War,

Active Army Divisions were cut from 18 to 10; Navy Carrier task forces were reduced from 15 to 11; Air Force active fighter wings went from 24 to 13; and Marine Corps active-duty strength dropped from 197,000 to 174,000...[while] overseas deployments have increased more than 300 percent.<sup>14</sup>

Another sign that contractors are playing an increasing role in contingency operations is the publishing of policy, doctrine, and “how-to” manuals concerning this support option. The following section provides a brief recap of the emerging joint and service literature because it will provide an important basis for analyzing the contractor questions examined later in the paper.

## **EMERGING JOINT AND SERVICE CONTRACTING LITERATURE**

Much of the literature on this subject has evolved in the following manner. First, contractors have been used during contingencies without much formal policy, guidance or doctrine. Second, insights about their employment have been publicized in professional journals and discussed in conferences on the subject. Finally, policy, doctrine, and procedures were developed and published to formalize the use of contractors. In many ways, the use of contractors is becoming institutionalized in the joint and service communities because, by

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<sup>14</sup> Casper W. Weinberger, “U.S. Military: Downsized, Downtrodden, and Discontented,” American Legion Magazine (October 2000). URL <<http://www.legion.org/pubs/2000/military10.htm>> accessed 11 November 2000.

default, it is the way we are doing business, instead of a conscious transformation in the way we support deployed forces. With that said, the status of this evolutionary process for the joint community and for each service will be described below.

**Joint.**<sup>15</sup> Joint doctrine has recently been published concerning contractors in theater. In fact, Joint Publication 4-0 (JP 4-0), *Doctrine for Logistics Support of Joint Operations*, added a fifth chapter solely devoted to the subject. This is a large step forward toward institutionalizing this support option into joint operations. This recent inclusion of contractor support into joint doctrine has largely come as a response to the increased use of contractors during contingencies. Joint doctrine distills its contracting guidance into nine pages in JP 4-0, namely, Chapter V: *Contractors in the Theater*. Much of this chapter's information is borrowed from Army doctrine but is written from a joint perspective. Probably the most salient guidance presented in this chapter is the identification of the supported Commander-in-Chief's (CINC's) responsibilities concerning contractors. Specifically, the CINC is responsible for the following:

- Overall contractor visibility
- Integration of contractors in the force flow (e.g., TPFDD)
- Determination of contractor status under U.S., Host Nation, Status-of-Forces-Agreement, and International Law
- Establishment of theater specific policies governing contractors

**U.S. Army.** The Army has taken the lead in developing policy, doctrine, and "how-to" publications that guide the use of contractor support in theater. The Army has accumulated much information through using contractors and has distilled this knowledge into two comprehensive documents on this subject; FM 100-21, *Contractors on the Battlefield*; and FM 100-10-2 *Contracting Support on the Battlefield*.

The first document, *Contractors on the Battlefield*, provides broad reaching guidance on the subject and is the source of the information presented in this sub-section. The preface best summarizes the trend toward battlefield contracting and the need for published doctrine:

Recent reductions in military structure, coupled with high mission requirements and the unlikely prospect of full mobilization, means that to reach a minimum of required levels of support, the existing force structure [of the U.S. Army] may often have to be significantly augmented with contractors. As this trend continues, the future battlefield will require ever increasing numbers of contractor personnel. Accordingly, commanders, staffs, and soldiers must be more familiar with how to use contractors effectively.<sup>16</sup>

Army doctrine is the most advanced of all the services and this maturity stems from experiences using contractors in past operations. Their doctrine provides essential information needed when planning for contractors focuses on the following areas:

- Policy on use of Contractors
- Types of Contractors
- Legal Considerations
- Contractor and Military Differences
- Risk Considerations
- Contractible Functions
- Government Support Requirements (e.g., TPFDD, and Force Protection)
- Guidance on Managing Contractors

Use of Contractors Policy. Army policy states that contractors should be used as a force multiplier to “increase existing capabilities, provide new sources of supplies and services, and bridge gaps in the deployed forces structure.”<sup>17</sup> Additionally, Army policy points out that

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<sup>15</sup> JP 4-0, Chapter V.

<sup>16</sup> Field Manual 100-21, *Contractors on the Battlefield* (Washington DC: DoA, June 1999), iii. Cited hereafter as FM 100-21.

<sup>17</sup> FM 100-21, 1-5.

contractors do “not replace force structure and the Army will retain core capabilities necessary to perform critical battlefield support functions using military units/personnel”<sup>18</sup>

Types of Contractors.<sup>19</sup> There are three types of civilian contractors that can be deployed in theater.

- **Theater Support Contractors.** Civilians supporting deployed forces under a prearranged contract or a contract awarded while in theater.
- **External Support Contractors.** The Army’s LOGCAP, the Air Force’s AFCAP, Navy’s CONCAP, and TRANSCOM CRAF are examples of these types of contractors.
- **Systems Contractors.** Civilians contracted to support weapons systems such as aircraft, or ground weapons systems.

Legal Considerations. The legal document known as a contract, and more specifically the Statement of Work (SOW) governs contractors. This document limits the discretionary authority of the commander to direct the contracted civilian under his charge. The commander must also be cognizant of the contractor’s status under the Hague and Geneva Conventions. Under these treaties, contractors are neither considered a combatant or a noncombatant, but are identified as contractors accompanying the armed forces. Additionally, host nation status-of-forces agreements must also be considered with regards to contractors. Finally, commanders must understand that contractors are not subject to the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) except during a declared war.

Contractors and Military Personnel Difference. There are three major differences between a civilian contractor and uniformed military personnel. First, contractors are hired to perform only those tasks specifically assigned in the contract and not “other duties” as assigned

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<sup>18</sup> FM 100-21, 2-5.

by a commander. Second, contractors are non-combatant civilians accompanying the force. Commanders should not direct these civilians to perform duties that would jeopardize their legal status on the battlefield. Finally, civilians are not in the military chain of command. Instead, they take direction from the commander's contracting structure. The only way that commanders can direct a contractor is either through their Contracting Officer or the Contract Officer's Representative.

Risk Considerations. Army doctrine focuses on the necessity for assessing the risk of using contractor support. This assessment is critical because "failure of the contractor to provide the required support could jeopardize the overall success of the operation."<sup>20</sup> Even if the contractor is willing to provide support in a hostile environment, the contract cost may dramatically increase, as the operational environment becomes more dangerous.

Contractible Functions. The Army will consider contracting a multitude of functions depending on "the operational situation and its associated risk."<sup>21</sup> These functions include supply, services, transportation, maintenance, communication, engineering, medical/dental, facilities & housing, and general labor.

Government Support Requirements. One of the great advantages of using contractor support is that they "are expected to be self-sufficient... however, in some circumstances... government furnished support may be appropriate because the government can provide it less expensively than if the contractor were to provide it himself." Government support could

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<sup>19</sup> FM 100-21, 1-6.

<sup>20</sup> FM 100-21, 2-4.

<sup>21</sup> FM 100-21, 2-7.

include “transportation, facilities, force protection, life support, morale support services, health services and equipment and material necessary for the contractor to do his job.”<sup>22</sup>

Facilitating and Managing Contractor Support. This portion of Army doctrine deals with enabling the contractor to deploy into theater when required and managing him when he arrives in theater. Contractors, like the uniformed forces, need to be included in the Time Phased Force and Deployment Data (TPFDD) planning process and be properly processed before deployment. Beyond planning for their arrival in theater, predeployment processing and training of contractor personnel are also required. Training could cover a range of subjects such as legal considerations (i.e., Host Nation Laws, Geneva Convention, SOFA, and Rules of engagement), NBC training, weapons familiarization, customs and courtesies, and security considerations.

**U.S. Air Force.**<sup>23</sup> The U.S. Air Force (USAF) has published policy letters and a two volume set titled *Air Force Contract Augmentation Program (AFCAP): Concept of Operations* concerning contractors. The USAF developed AFCAP for reasons similar to the Army’s LOGCAP. They conceived AFCAP to act as a contract force multiplier for augmenting civil engineering and logistics capabilities in support of worldwide contingency operations, principally in military operations other than war (MOOTW).

USAF policy states that uniformed personnel will be the first responders, providing initial bed-down of forces, but they consider AFCAP a support option as soon as extended MOOTWs are foreseen. They designed AFCAP to provide USAF leadership with additional resources, relieve deployment tempo, enhance military training, relieve stress and strain on home base operations, and preserve War Reserve Materiel (WRM). During operations, AFCAP could be

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<sup>22</sup> FM 100-21, 2-15.

<sup>23</sup> Air Force Contract Augmentation Program (AFCAP), *Concept of Operations: Volume I and II*, (Washington DC: DoAF, n.d.)

called to provide contingency facilities and equipment, sustainment, base recovery capabilities, reconstitution of WRM, restoration of contingency basing sites, and backfill at home bases. Additionally, AFCAP could be called to perform tactical logistics functions such as material support (i.e., supply), transportation, general engineering, and other services essential to the care and feeding of deployed forces.

**U.S. Navy.** Like the other services, the Navy has been using contractors during recent contingencies. On the other hand, they lag behind the joint community, the Army and Air Force with regard to publishing any guidance on the subject. A title search of Naval Doctrinal Publications (NDP) and Naval Warfighting Publications did not reveal any dedicated documents on the subject. Research did show that this subject is being mentioned in the Navy's revised draft doctrine. In fact, the Navy has mentioned contractors throughout the final draft revision for Naval Doctrinal Publication 4 (NDP 4) *Naval Logistics*, dated September 1999. Specifically, the draft NDP 4 mentions contractors as a support option for supply, maintenance, engineering, health services, and other logistics functions such as billeting and food service.

The draft NDP 4 also mentions the Construction Capabilities (CONCAP) contract discussed earlier in this paper - "CONCAP is an extension of the Naval Construction Force. It is a civilian contractor that is used to provided augmentation in the theater of operations."<sup>24</sup> The Navy has used this program several times during recent contingencies and exercises, to include the cleanup efforts for the Mount Pinatubo disaster and Hurricane Iniki, as well as during Exercises Cobra Gold in Thailand and Tamdem Thrust in Australia.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Naval Doctrinal Publication 4, *Final Draft Revision: Naval Logistics* (Washington, DC: OCNO and HQMC, September 1999, 51. Cited hereafter as *Final Draft Revision NDP 4*.

<sup>25</sup> Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Pacific Division, "CONCAP," URL: <<http://www.efdpac.navfac.mil/divisions/contingency/concap.htm>> accessed 12 February 2001.

**U.S. Marine Corps.** The Marine Corps is far behind the other services with respect to publishing doctrine outlining the use of contractors in theater. A title search of Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications (MCDP), Marine Corps Warfighting Publications (MCWP), and Marine Corps Reference Publications (MCRP) did not reveal any published or drafted doctrine on the subject.

Although no doctrine exists concerning contractor support in theater, the Marine Corps recently published policy concerning the employment of systems contractors for ground equipment. Marine Corps Order 4200: *Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) for Ground Equipment, Ground Weapon Systems, Munitions, and Information Systems* states the following:

- The Marine Corps is an expeditionary force and will retain via all available means the maintenance and support capabilities to maintain readiness.
- The potential use of CLS should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The decision to use CLS should be based on analysis of alternative support arrangements (e.g., organic support, contractor support or a mixture)
- CLS requires a contingency plan to transition to organic support if CLS fails to meet the operational supportability requirements.
- CLS should be transparent to the operating forces.
- CLS requirements must be identified and included in all planning scenarios
- CLS personnel will not normally be deployed forward of the aerial or sea port of debarkation.
- Every effort will be made to accommodate joint and interoperability considerations.<sup>26</sup>

## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Contractors can and have contributed at each level of warfare and have played a significant role in military history. Much can be learned from joint and service doctrine, policy,

and literature about contractor employment during contingency operations. Collectively, this information provides an analytical basis for examining the following questions. Are civilian contractors really a force multiplier? What are the benefits of using Contractor support? What are the risks and limitations associated with using contractors? And finally, should the Marine Corps depend upon contractors to perform critical support missions? The answers to these questions will be the focus of the remainder of this paper.

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<sup>26</sup> Marine Corps Order 4200, *Contractor Logistics Support for Ground Equipment, Ground Weapon Systems, Munitions and Information Systems* (Washington DC: HQMC (LPC-2), 7 December 2000).

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTRACTORS AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

Are civilian contractors a force multiplier? A simple answer to this question is a cautionary “yes.” “Lessons learned throughout our country’s history, including those from our most recent military operations, demonstrate that contracting can be an effective force multiplier.”<sup>27</sup>

In the short run, contractors act as a “force multiplier” in that they perform support functions that would have required deployed troops to perform. This has allowed the United States Armed Forces to maximize the number of its military personnel available to perform direct, mission-related tasks.

In the case of the U.S. Army, contractor support has prevented unnecessary reserve call-ups in support of contingency commitments. Specifically, the Army maintains a much higher percentage of its combat units in the active forces than Combat Support (CS) and Combat Services Support (CSS) units. For example, 43% of the Army’s combat capability is in the Active Component, compared to 37% of the CS and 28% of the CSS.<sup>28</sup> When faced with a choice of activating the Army National Guard / Army Reserve or relying on contractor support, Army planners have frequently decided to use the latter.

Contractors also act as a force multiplier when limits are placed on the number of uniformed military personnel that can be committed to a Small Scale Contingency (SSC). In these cases the military will most likely increase its reliance on civilian contractor support to

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<sup>27</sup> Joe A. Fortner, “Institutionalizing Contractor Support on the Battlefield” *Army Logistician* (July/August 2000), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/julaug00/ms570.htm>> accessed 17 September 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Timothy Mason, LTC, USA, OCAR-FP. Electronic Mail to author. Subject. “Re: Information in Support of Contractors on the Battlefield Masters Paper” 9:10 AM, 2 October 2000.

provide essential logistics capabilities because they will not count toward a military personnel cap set by the National Command Authorities (NCA).

In the long run, the increased use of contractors may detrimentally impact the sustainment of support force structure that has a track record for being contracted out. It is the stated policy of both the USA and USAF that contractors will not replace force structure and that they will retain core capabilities necessary to perform critical battlefield support functions using military units/personnel. But if these services continually contract out these core capabilities in MOOTW contingencies they may run the risk of degrading the readiness of military capabilities maintained in their force structure.

The services may find it irresistible to cut resources to support units that can be contracted out during contingencies. Resource cutbacks could come in the form of reduced manning levels for support units and delayed modernization of equipment. When tough budget decisions are made at the service level, it is reasonable to assume those “must have” combat capabilities or military unique items could get the nod over capabilities with a track record of contractor support.

Col Patrick J. Dulin, USMC, echoes this thought in his article *Logistics Vulnerabilities in the Future*:

Use of civilians may be particularly pronounced if under-funding of the force structure for two nearly simultaneous MTW's persists. It is likely that, when faced with the dilemma of trying to maintain one level of force structure while being funded at a lower level, the military will opt to retain a higher “tooth to tail” ratio. This means that the military will probably retain combat units at the expense of logistics units.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Patrick J. Dulin, Col USMC, “Logistics Vulnerability in the Future” *Army Logistician* (January/February 1998), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/janfeb98/ms227.htm>> accessed 23 November 2000. Cited hereafter as Dulin.

Some readers may believe that this scenario is unlikely to occur, but the following quote suggests that the Army may already be treading on this slippery slope. Col J. Lynton Brooke, USA, sounds his warning to the Army's aviation community that contractors may be solving one problem but creating others.

Today, the utilization of civilian contractors to offset austere aviation maintenance structure and persistently short manning, while seemingly productive in the short term, has negative impact on aviation maintenance soldier training and experience and may lead to the employment of civilians in inappropriate roles and locations.<sup>30</sup>

Another dimension to the force multiplier issue is the cost of employing contractors during contingencies. Paying for contractor support is not an inexpensive option. Through the year 2000, the U.S. Army has paid over \$1.3 Billion to LOGCAP providers for support in Somalia, Aviano, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Haiti, the Balkans, and East Timor.<sup>31</sup> This brings up an interesting question concerning the cost effectiveness of using contractors instead of organic support. Specifically, did the Army save money by using contractors instead of organic support forces, or did they just drain scarce resources away from their organic CSS units? The evidence presented in this paper is inconclusive one way or the other on this question. Regardless, a comprehensive cost analysis should be completed before the force multiplier question can be fully answered.

This section suggests that using contractors during contingencies can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand they allow commanders to maximize the number of their military personnel available to perform direct, mission-related tasks while contractors perform support missions. On the other hand, they could give services a convenient excuse not to properly fund

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<sup>30</sup> Lynton J. Brooke, COL, USA, *Contracting, An Alarming Trend in Aviation Maintenance*, USAWC Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, 16 April 1998), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Randy King, ODCSLOG, "Cost Chart," e-mail to author at 8:19 AM, 2 February 2000, and updated with a second e-mail "Re: Cost Chart," 5:40 AM 5 February 2001. Mr. King has program oversight for the Army's LOGCAP.

organic support capabilities, letting this force structure slowly die on the vine through lack of modernization and decreased manning levels.

An inescapable conclusion is that MAGTF commanders and planners need to understand the force multiplier issue as well as the risks, limitations, and benefits of using contractors during operations. The next chapter of this paper focuses on those aspects of contracting that make this support option so desirable.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONTRACTOR SUPPORT BENEFITS**

There are many benefits to using contractors during contingencies. As discussed above, they act as a force multiplier. They can also provide logistics flexibility to be able to respond to unique challenges and may be the most economical and responsive option for supporting deployed forces.

It is not hard to imagine why Marine Corps logisticians would seek contractor support during a contingency if they did not possess the organic capability to accomplish the mission. Clearly, civilian contractors are an additional support mechanism that can be added to a Marine Corps logistician's bag of tricks.

Numerous historical examples are available from recent operations to illustrate the flexibility and responsiveness of using this support concept. According to the current Commanding General of the 1<sup>st</sup> Force Service Support Group, Brigadier General B. M. Lott, his experience using contractors in Haiti illustrates the responsiveness and flexibility of using deployed contractors.<sup>32</sup>

Specifically, BGen Lott used "Brown and Root" - a LOGCAP provider - during Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti, while he served as Chief of Staff of the Joint Logistics Support Command (JLSC). His impressions of the contractor were all positive. Brown and Root provided engineering and transportation support and other services such as operating the mess hall to the Joint Forces deployed.

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<sup>32</sup> Bradley M. Lott, BGen, USMC, interviewed by author 2 December 1999. Quoted with his permission (e-mail to author 10:23 AM, 18 January 2001). Cited hereafter as Lott Interview.

He related one particular experience with Brown and Root that demonstrate the flexibility and responsiveness that are possible from a theater support contractor. During the Haiti operations, the Joint Force found it difficult, “bordering on impossible”, for the Army to transport its garbage to the dumps located outside the gates. This task was difficult because the starving Haitian civilians would chase down the open bed military trucks carrying the trash, stop them if they could, and strip them of their cargo. Several pedestrian accidents resulted because the trucks would not slow down. Unfortunately, some Haitians were killed when the trucks ran over them.

A couple of shootouts also occurred when armed Haitians shot at the trucks, trying to stop them. The incidents caused unwanted media attention. With Joint Logistics Support Command’s approval, Brown and Root solved the problem within 48-hours using a novel approach. They procured “clam shell” garbage trucks from the U.S., transported them to Haiti, and operated the trash trucks. Once employed, the civilians quickly learned that they could not get at the garbage and found the compressed trash useless when it was released at the dump. The Joint Force did not have another incident relating to transporting garbage during the operation.

This is just one of many examples where contractors solved seemingly impossible problems. In the future the Marine Corps should consider using contractors to fill gaps in its organic logistics capability, if operationally feasible.

There are other benefits to using contractors. First, they may be the most economical support option available to the deploying forces. Second, the contractor may have expertise and a support infrastructure in the operational area. These benefits are by pointed out by LtGen Brabham:

There are many worldwide and international corporations that have “in place” capabilities that can greatly reduce both force structure capabilities and strategic lift

required responding to a contingency. Engineering is perhaps the most salient capability but other logistics capabilities also exist – line haul, stevedoring, and personal support items to name a few.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, contractors may be the most responsive support option while reducing transportation requirements at the same time. The Navy summarizes these benefits in the draft revision of NDP 4:

Forward operations, geographically removed from much of the formal acquisition process, often demand time-sensitive reactions to support requirements. Local contracting can often support these requirements and reduce demand on the CONUS industrial base and may significantly reduce transportation requirements, while simultaneously reducing response time.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the many benefits of using contractors, there are significant risks and limitations that need to be addressed. The next chapter will discuss these issues.

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<sup>33</sup> Brabham 12 Dec 99 e-mail.

<sup>34</sup> Final Draft Revision NDP 4, 11.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONTRACTOR SUPPORT RISKS AND LIMITATIONS

Understanding the risks and limitations associated with using contractors in a deployed environment is critical to making decisions on the feasibility and viability of this support option. Specifically, some of the risks that commanders and planners need to consider when using contractors are as follows:

- Contractors may not accomplish their assigned missions,
- Contractors are not warfighters and must be protected,
- Contractors operate outside the normal chain of command,
- Contractors could compromise operational security,
- Contractors could inflate the cost of goods and material through artificial competition.

**Risk to Mission Accomplishment.** The gravest risk to forces using contractors is that mission accomplishment could be jeopardized if the contractor fails to provide the agreed upon support. If this risk materializes, the supported forces have several options. First, they can support themselves using deployed organic resources if these assets are already in theater – most likely at a degraded level of support. Second, they can arrange support from another service, allied partner, coalition member, host nation, or another contractor. Finally, they can live without this support, if feasible. If the supported force cannot live without the support but also cannot find replacement sources it is very likely that the mission could be placed at risk.

Several recent articles concerning the employment of contractors during operations in Haiti,<sup>35</sup> Bosnia,<sup>36</sup> and East Timor<sup>37</sup> point out the successful use of contractors during recent contingencies. This is a positive sign that contractor support arrangements have become more reliable, but does not mean that contractors will not fail in the future.

In fact, there is historical precedent for civilians quitting during past Marine Corps operations for a variety of reasons. Earlier in this paper the involvement of contractors/civilian during hostilities on Wake Island, Guadalcanal, and Saudi Arabia was discussed as positive examples of civilians supporting deployed Marines in a wartime scenario. It is now appropriate to discuss the dark side of these success stories.

In the case of the contractors on Wake Island, Major Devereux tells us that some of the civilians deserted him when he needed their help the most.

Not all of the civilians helped us. Some of them took off into the brush when the first bomb fell and did not show themselves again until after the surrender. They took quantities of supplies, dug themselves shelters and sat out the battle...<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that the contractors on Wake Island were not obligated to build defensive fortifications but were only contracted to construct an airfield for the Navy on the island.

Another historical example shows how contracted civilians do not necessarily have the same work ethic as uniformed personnel. The civilian natives that carried much of the landing supplies during the Guadalcanal campaign became ineffective for different reasons than the

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<sup>35</sup> Gerald A. Dolimish, MAJ, USA, "Logistics in Haiti" *Army Logistician* (January/February 1996), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/janfeb96/ms944.htm>> accessed 30 September 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Darrel A. Williamson, LTC, USA, "Contracted Logistics in Bosnia" *Army Logistician* (May/June 1998), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/may-jun98/ms286.htm>> accessed 30 September 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Philip M. Mattox, BGEN, USA and William A. Guinn, LTC, USA, "Contingency Contracting in East Timor," *Army Logistician* (Jul/Aug 2000), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/julaug00/ms565.htm>> accessed 17 Jul 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Devereux, 63-64.

workers on Wake Island. These natives did not stop working because they were frightened but because they lost interest in their assigned task, and the Marines employing them treated them too well. As the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division After Action Report points out,

Their effectiveness soon waned. The troops fraternized with them, trading food, tobacco, and even clothing for souvenirs. A mistake was made in pampering them with a diet of American type instead of the habitual pound of rice, per man, per day, plus a bit of meat. They soon developed gastric disturbances. A Medical Officer was assigned the duty of caring for them, and further spoiled them by applying bandages to their sores, etc. With childish enthusiasm they vied with each other to be the first on sick report and proudly displayed bigger and better bandages to their envious companions. At the end of the 10 days, many claimed their wages and departed...<sup>39</sup>

A similar situation of civilians quitting happened during Desert Shield / Desert Storm. The drivers for “Saudi Motors” who were critical to moving supplies for the deployed Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) had a habit of leaving in the middle of the night to take better paying jobs. Marine Corps logisticians had to continually increase their wages in order to keep them from quitting.<sup>40</sup> If this attrition had continued, MEF logisticians would have had an additional planning burden arranging alternative transportation.

The foregoing examples provide an excellent opportunity to discuss two key differences between contractor and military personnel pertinent to this issue. First, civilian contractors can quit without warning while military personnel cannot do so without deserting. Second, unlike uniformed service personnel who can be ordered to perform “other duties” as directed, contractors are hired to perform only specific tasks that are clearly defined in a contract.

**Contractors are not Warfighters.** The cultural ethos of the Marine Corps is that every Marine is a rifleman and can fight a battle when and where called upon. This cannot be said

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<sup>39</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> MarDiv Guadalcanal AAR.

<sup>40</sup> Brabham Lecture.

about civilians employed by contractors. They are not warriors but employees, and cannot be expected to protect themselves like all Marine Corps Support Units. Major Devereux echoes this fact.

One must take into consideration the fact that the civilians were not mentally prepared for the shock of war as were the Marines. One or two of my detachment had fought in the First World War and a larger group of us had seen service in Nicaragua, but even the greenest recruit had been conditioned from the day he went to boot camp to regard war as his trade. The attitude was: if you have to fight, that's just part of the job. The civilians had not been conditioned in this way, so it seems entirely understandable that many of them tried to hide from danger.<sup>41</sup>

Commanders are responsible for protecting contractors assigned to them and must allocate scarce resources to this effort. This task may not seem overly burdensome in a low threat environment but could become so if hostilities increase. In these high-risk operational situations, civilian contractors are a poor substitute for uniformed personnel. They are not trained to the same standards as military personnel and cannot man defensive positions like a military cook might be tasked. Because they are not warfighters, the mission could be placed in jeopardy.

A contractor who is killed or otherwise incapacitated due to physical limitations or ineptitude (e.g., inability to don protective gear or walking into a minefield) could put a mission at risk.<sup>42</sup>

Additionally, the threat may be so severe that the contractor is prohibited from providing meaningful support. In these cases there is no substitute for organic military support capabilities.

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<sup>41</sup> Devereux, 63-64.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell.

**Command and Control of Contractors.** Because contractors operate outside the normal chain of command, there are several command and control, legal, and readiness issues that must be taken into consideration.

First, commanders can not exercise the same command and control over contractors that they inherently can over assigned joint forces. Specifically, commanders must ensure that the contract Statement of Work (SOW) includes control measures. Some specific strategies to maintain control are as follows:

The commander “can exercise indirect control of the contract personnel through contract terms and conditions, employer assimilation of command directives into employer-employee agreements, and attachment (with special reporting procedures) into specific military units. The commander can direct a subordinated unit to provide administrative accountability of contractors personnel. Moreover, contractor personnel must adhere to all guidelines and obey all general instructions issued by a commander. Violations may result in limited access to facilities of revocation of any special status the employee enjoys. In extreme cases, the commander can direct removal of an employee from the AO.”<sup>43</sup>

Removal of an employee from the Area of Operation (AO) may be the only effective way that the commander can legally discipline contractors.

The only time a civilian can fall under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) is in the event of a congressionally declared war...The drawback is that the field commander’s hands are tied to some degree, and the only recourse in the case of non-performing civilians is to have the contracting officer modify or terminate the contract.<sup>44</sup>

Another vital Command and Control issue involves the commander’s ability to integrate the deploying contractor into Force, Deployment, Planning, & Execution (FDP&E). Specifically, ensuring contractors are included in Time Phased Force Deployment (TPFDD)

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<sup>43</sup> Joe A. Fortner and Ron Jaeckle, “Institutionalizing Contractors on the Battlefield,” *Army Logistician* (November/December 1998), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/novdec98/ms317.htm>> accessed 30 September 1999.

<sup>44</sup> James E. Althouse, MAJ, USA, “Contractors on the Battlefield: What Doctrine Says, and Doesn’t Say,” *Army Logistician* (November/December 1998), URL: <<http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/novdec98/ms323.htm>> accessed 30 September 1999.

planning is vital. Without FDP&E integration requirements specifically stated in the contract Statement of Work, the Commander runs the risk that the deploying contractor will not be able to provide vital support because he can not gain access to airfields or ports in theater. For example, aircraft or ships arranged by the contractor for movement of his personnel / equipment may not be allowed to land or berth because of throughput constraint, improper clearances, and a host of other restrictions. In these cases, the contractor may be forced to return to the United States only to re-deploy into theater, all at cost of the contracting service component.

There has been much written concerning the messy issue of the legal authority governing the discipline of contractors. Commanders must understand that they do not possess the same legal authority inherent to their command of uniformed personnel. A variety of statutes could govern the conduct of civilian contractors to include laws of the United States, the host nation, and international community or a combination of each. What is clear is that this issue should be addressed prior to deployment.

With regard to the law of war concerning contractors – a warning on this subject comes to us from the hundreds of civilians taken prisoner on Wake Island. Despite the fact that they were not uniformed combatants, the Japanese took them prisoner, treated them harshly and used many as slave labor. In fact, many of these civilians died in the hands of their captors.<sup>45</sup> This points to the fact that potential adversaries may disregard the laws of wars and improperly handle captured contractors. This may be especially true during future conflicts with non-state actors (e.g., terrorist groups) or countries without organized governments (e.g., Somalia).

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<sup>45</sup> Gavan Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of World War II in the Pacific* (New York: William Morrow, 1994).

The final command and control issue concerning contractors involves the commander's inability to monitor readiness. Currently, a commander can only assume that the contractors possess the necessary capabilities (e.g., resources and expertise) to accomplish the assigned task.

Today U.S. Military forces enjoy the reputation of being the best trained, best resourced, and most capable military of any nation in the world... One main reason for this success is that unit readiness is monitored constantly by commanders on their units' ability to accomplish the mission.... In contrast, there is no system currently in place to monitor contractor readiness... In order to reduce risk, contractors support must be tested and evaluated in ongoing operations and training events on a continual basis, and contractors must undergo the same rigorous scrutiny by Congress and senior military leaders that our military faces daily.<sup>46</sup>

**Operational Security.** Another risk associated with hiring contractors is that they could compromise operational security required by the deployed forces.

The trend toward increased civilization of logistics opens a particularly inviting avenue of attack for future opponents. Civilian organizations, especially contractors hastily hired in crisis situations, do not have the luxury or the economic incentive to conduct rigid security screening of employees. Lack of adequate screening could allow an opponent to infiltrate personnel into the work force...<sup>47</sup>

This problem could be even more severe if the contractor hires local labor. In light of the recent terrorist attacks on U. S. Forces abroad, there will always be an asymmetric threat against deployed forces. Bringing contractors into the equation provides additional security challenges for commanders to solve.

**Competition for Goods and Services.** Another risk to the deploying forces is that theater support contractors may create artificial competition for vital goods and services, resulting in higher prices for scarce resources. For example, a deployed theater may have a limited supply of commercial trucking, building supplies, or skilled labor that may be the subject of a bidding war when too many customers are vying for limited capabilities. It is important to

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<sup>46</sup> Eric A. Orsini and Gary T. Bublitz, "Contractors on the Battlefield: Risks on the Road Ahead," *Army Logistician* (January/February 1999), URL: <[http://www.cascom.army.mil/rock\\_drill](http://www.cascom.army.mil/rock_drill)> accessed 30 September 1999.

note that most theater support contractors, such as Brown and Root, are paid on a cost-plus award fee basis. In other words, the contractor's cost of doing business is passed onto the customer plus a bonus for a job well done. This means that the contractor will pay almost any price to get the support desired by his customer, and could out bid other competitors (e.g., other service components, or coalition partners) while doing so. The result is that the cost of the inflated goods and services are then passed on to an unsuspecting customer (i.e., another service) who may have "sticker shock" when the contractor's bill needs to be paid.

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<sup>47</sup> Dulin.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONTRACTORS AND MARINE CORPS SUPPORT MISSIONS

Contractors should be employed during contingencies when and where operationally appropriate. With that said, the Marine Corps should not solely depend upon contractors to perform critical support missions during contingencies.

LtGen Brabham has specific thoughts on this matter. He points out the mission differences between the Army and Marine Corps and offers his judgment concerning outsourcing non-core functions.

The Army's mission leads to more opportunities for large contractor effort than does that of the Marine Corps. In fact the Army's doctrinal Theater Army responsibilities included support for Marine Forces as the theater matures and available contractors are a natural [source] for that level of support.

I would suggest that the answer to [the] question lies in a mission analysis for each of the Armed Services. There is a place for contractor support in each but that level of support should be consistent with their mission and potential mission profiles. As in most issues, a one-size answer won't work.

That said, I do believe that outsourcing non-core capabilities has a place in our Corps, where it makes sense, and is something that we should aggressively pursue. In all examinations both cost and mission profiles must be considered.<sup>48</sup>

An area where contracting may be appropriate for the Marine Corps is at the operational level of war. Specifically, contractors could augment Service operational logistics tasks such as arrival & assembly operations, intratheater lift, theater distribution, sustainment, and reconstitution and redeployment services. Many of these tasks are the responsibility of the Marine Logistics Command (MLC) under the Marine Forces (MARFOR) Component Headquarters in theater.

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<sup>48</sup> Brabham 12 Dec 99 e-mail.

The Marine Corps will probably have to depend on contractors at the operational level whether it likes it or not. Both the Army and the Navy are responsible for providing much theater support (i.e., operational level functions) to the Marine Corps during sustained operations and will most likely use contractors to perform some of these tasks. Even though the Army and Navy may force deployed Marine Corps forces to use contractors, MAGTF commanders still retain the authority to decide whether this support option is appropriate for exclusive Marine Corps support missions. On a case-by-case basis, the operational threat, availability of organic support resources, and mission profiles would all have to be considered prior to making this decision.

At the tactical level of war, the Marine Corps should be extremely careful about tasking contractors to perform CSS functions. Although contractors may be appropriate during low risk contingencies where the Marine Corps is not able to deploy organic capabilities, they should not be the first choice for support. Organic Marine Corps CSS should always be the preferred option.

BGen Lott sees tactical CSS as a core capability whose force structure should be maintained, but also notes that operational logistics tasks could be tasked to contractors.

Our job is to be there first. Most places the Marine Corps will be deployed will be hostile. Because of this we need to keep our CSS structure intact. Does that mean that we will always go without contractors? The answer is no. Contractors run our MPF ships and support some of our aviation units...

I can see contractors supporting the reconstitution and backloading of our Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) ships or in support of the Marine Logistics Command during Major Theater of War (MTW) scenarios.

I would have a hard time seeing us contracting out one of our CSS functions. The nature of our operations is far too expeditionary for that to be feasible.

Even benign functions in garrison, such as postal dispersing, and exchange services are vital to our Marines in combat. They need to go as far forward as the furthest Marine.

Marines that have been in the field for over thirty days will need a host of services to include personal use items, pay, and definitely their mail. These services will be needed even in the most hostile environments.<sup>49</sup>

One traditional Marine Corps function that will be performed by contractors during future contingencies is the maintenance of new ground and aviation weapon systems. There is a trend in the Marine Corps to use Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) arrangements for these new systems. For example, the MV-22 Osprey will depend upon CLS for engine maintenance. A seven-year CLS contract was signed in May 1998 to provide all off-wing maintenance (i.e., intermediate & depot level maintenance), including material support, at a contractor facility for the AE1107C engine program. Some of the anticipated benefits from using CLS include \$500 million savings in life cycle support and a 28% increase in engine readiness.<sup>50</sup> The Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAAV) program office will most likely follow the lead of the MV-22 and embrace CLS for maintaining this new weapon system, as well. If this trend continues, more and more contractors will be deploying with Marines to support new equipment as the Marine Corps modernizes its aging assets.

The Marine Corps is also considering contracting less obvious missions. A recent *Marine Corps Times* article reported that “the Marine Corps is thinking about renting aerial tanker services.” This would mark a radical departure from the current trend of only contracting logistics support because “aerial refueling has been regarded as an exclusive military function.”

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<sup>49</sup> Lott interview.

<sup>50</sup> Naval Supply System Command, *Contractor Logistics Support (CLS): Lessons Learned for Application within the Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAAV) Program* (Washington, DC: n. d.), Appendix B, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Jim Starling, “Corps Considers Private Aerial Refueling Service,” *Marine Corps Times* (25 September 2000), 29.

Even though there are specific cases where the using contractors may be the most effective way to support the MAGTF, the Marine Corps should never adopt the widespread use of contractors due to its expeditionary nature. A key aspect of expeditionary capabilities is self-supportability, and the Marine Corps should guard this core competency jealously. With vigilance, and the development of appropriate doctrine and policies, the Marine Corps can prevent itself from becoming too dependent on contractor support in theater. Without proactive planning and a full understanding of the ramifications of using contractors, the Corps could unwittingly compromise its warfighting capabilities and expeditionary nature by relying too heavily on logistics mercenaries.

Encouragingly, the Marine Corps has continued to invest in its CSS force structure – the most likely target for replacement by contractor in theater. In fact, the Corps has 20% of all U.S. military active ground maneuver battalions, 20% of active fighter/attack squadrons, and 17% of attack helicopters, it has 33% of the active ground combat service support CSS forces.<sup>52</sup> One can infer from these statistics that the Marine Corps invests more heavily in its active ground CSS structure than the U.S. Army. This means that it is easier for the Corps to be self-sustaining using organic, active CSS without heavily relying on either reserve augmentation or contractor support.

CSS is an integral part of the MAGTF. Contracting out currently organic functions could put the Marine Corps on the slippery slope of destroying the cohesiveness, scalability and warfighting effectiveness of the MAGTF. To quote Major General Myatt, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division Commanding General during Desert Shield / Desert Storm, the elements of the MAGTF

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<sup>52</sup> LtGen Bruce B. Knutson, LtGen Earl B. Hailston, and MajGen Emil R. Bedard, USMC, “Marine Forces: Ready and Relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (July 2000), 34.

form a “marvelous marriage, more powerful than the sum of the parts.”<sup>53</sup> The Marine Corps should be extremely careful before it divorces any current support capabilities in the MAGTF in favor of contractors - it would be a sad day in the Corps if a Contractor Support Element (CSE) was required in the MAGTF in order to accomplish the Corps’ expeditionary mission.

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<sup>53</sup> MajGen Michael J. Myatt, USMC, “Lessons from DESERT STORM,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (May 1998), 74.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

The Marine Corps has always organized its Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) to be self-supporting and has used contractors on an as-needed basis. Arguably, the ability to organically support its own forces has been a key factor in the Corps' operational success. Contractor/Civilian logistics support has been used throughout Marine Corps history when the operational situation has dictated that it would contribute to mission success. MAGTF planners should use this same rule when planning future operations. Both the benefits and risks of using these support options need to be carefully considered prior to employment of contractors.

Contractors may provide the most flexible, responsive and cost effective alternative for the MAGTF, but commanders must remember that these civilians are not warfighters and must be handled differently than Marines. A host of issues need to be considered when using contractors, to include force protection, command and control, operational security, and alternative support arrangements in the event that contractors fail to accomplish their missions.

The Marine Corps needs to address how contractors will be used in its doctrine, policy, and Professional Military Education programs. Understanding how contractors can be both a vital capability and a hindrance to a deployed MAGTF is vital to mission success.

Because contractors will remain a part of future MAGTF operations, the Marine Corps needs to study this trend and take proactive steps to manage the use of contractors in the expeditionary environment. The current MAGTF organization is scalable, self-sustaining, interoperable, and a world class fighting organization. With that said, it is extremely important that we do not let the use of contractors during contingencies degrade the wonderful marriage of all the elements in the MAGTF.

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